

EXPERIENCE NEWCASTLE

Reinvigorating our historic market town



More people living and working in our town

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and partners have an extensive programme for regeneration and growth of our town centre.

Working with partners; Newcastle Business Improvement District (BID), Staffordshire County Council, businesses and the local community, we have

targeted action to make Newcastle-under-Lyme a vibrant destination and unique visitor experience. Our town centre offers a place where everyone can live, work, shop, study and spend their leisure time. It has great retail, public service, leisure, cultural, business and residential facilities that work for local residents and attract visitors and businesses to the town centre.

- £150,000 has been secured from the Future High Streets Fund to develop detailed project proposals for the Rycroft area in Newcastle town centre. In the next phase councils will be eligible for up to £25 million of capital to invest in the regeneration of the town centres.

- Castle House, our new civic centre hub, opened its doors to the public in July 2018. Designed to boost a town centre economy and save taxpayers millions of pounds, it houses services from Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire Police and Aspire Housing's customer services department. The maximum building occupancy of Castle House is 1200 people.

- The Council and its partners are preparing a clear plan for under-utilised town centre buildings such as Lancaster Building and St George's Chambers by exploring the possibility of future residential use.



More visitors staying longer and spending more

The historic market

Newcastle's market is an integral part of the town centre offer and contributes to the overall retail experience for local people and visitors to enjoy. The market has been a feature of the town for centuries and remains important both culturally and economically.



Consultation with Newcastle-under-Lyme market traders was completed with the expert support of the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA). Alongside the findings of the public consultation this resulted in an action plan to re-invigorate the market. To affect a turnaround in the fortunes of the market, and secure its best impact in the town, it will be managed with the high street, rather than regarded in isolation. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and its partners are committed to making our market a success.

Action: **To reinvigorate the historic market to become a vibrant attraction**

- Improve trader experience and loyalty
- Improve the quality of the market experience
- Introduction of a Saturday Antique Market
- Improve number, diversity and quality of products
- Secure the market's long-term future
- Hosting regular specialist and themed markets

Guildhall

The historic Guildhall has been developed into a community hub with a wide range of services available to the public. It has encouraged town centre footfall. This key heritage building run by Support Staffordshire and Friends of the Guildhall helps voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations have town centre presence.



Parking

The Council has a wide range of car parks in Newcastle town centre which play an important role for visitors and businesses. Our ten-year Car Parking Strategy provides car parking which meets the current and future needs of the town centre for visitors, businesses and residents that will live in the town centre. We will minimise town centre congestion and improve the air quality.

Action: **We developed a short, medium and long-term parking policy for Newcastle Town Centre**

- Establish a charging policy which addresses the competing needs to businesses, shoppers and commuters.
- Improve the visitor experience of the Council's car parks by improved signage, modern payment methods, infrastructure works including CCTV and electrical vehicle charging points.
- Use accurate footfall and trading data to understand and review parking policy.
- Introduce a £1 after 1pm parking incentive.
- Improved signage to the car parks



Strong links with the local businesses

In 2015 Newcastle town centre businesses voted in favour of creating a Business Improvement District (BID) that supports all businesses and organisations in Newcastle by promoting the town. As partners we help BID to deliver their major objectives.

1. Promote Newcastle-under-Lyme and build on its strengths and characteristics as a vibrant, university, market town. Build awareness locally and regionally of its retail, leisure and professional service sectors and its college.

2. To develop the distinctive, safe, attractive and appealing experience for visitors and workers in Newcastle-under-Lyme to enjoy.

3. To encourage growth, development and investment of businesses and organisations which complement and build on the strengths of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Adding to the town centre experience

Two programmes of work are envisaged to deliver on the aspiration to make the town more able to meet future needs and trends.

Healthy High Street – addressing the trading conditions, determining a suite of actions which support economic vibrancy by generating footfall, growing confidence and supporting local traders.



We will support businesses in developing online trading and improving social media capability, to put local businesses in a strong position to address changing trading environment.

Diversification – reflecting the need to bring forward residential and non-retail employment uses into currently under-utilised or redundant assets, bringing more people into the town centre to live and work.

Staffordshire County Council with partners are leading on solutions to Town Centre Wayfinding by providing a clearer, more accessible and contemporary solution for visitor's journey through the town centre. The renewal of road signage improves the navigation of vehicles through Newcastle town centre, identifies its town centre vehicle parking and reduces air pollution.

The Council will further improve the visitor experience with additional town centre public art such as subway murals, sculptures and exhibitions and schedule of town centre cleaning.

Our message to support the planned changes are focussed on visitor experience; "Experience new street markets, experience great independent shops and experience a great night out."

Events add to the experience

Newcastle-under-Lyme offers a varied programme of events and attractions which focuses on engaging town centre businesses for support and to generate visitors.

- We are using the town centre Rycroft site to host events such as Gandey's Circus, No Fit State Circus and Ladyboys of Bangkok. The events have attracted thousands of visitors to the town.
- Alston Emery Art trail in which visitors walk in the footsteps of the acclaimed borough artist along a one mile, town centre route, finishing at the Brampton Museum and Art Gallery.
- Art Council England have awarded £1.75 million to consortium partners, BID, Keele University, Go Kidsgrove and New Vic Theatre, to expand their award-winning Appetite art project into Newcastle-under-Lyme. The four-year programme starts October 2019.
- SPACE campaign is a summer holiday activity scheme for young people which includes unlimited access to the Council's town centre leisure facilities at Jubilee2 during the six-week summer holidays.
- The Philip Astley Project celebrates the life and legacy of the inventor of the modern day circus who was born in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The Circus 250 event was celebrated with full programme of events in the town centre. The Homecoming event was a free, annual, innovative modern day circus event in the town centre celebrating the life of Philip Astley. Circus professionals entertain visitors with a mix of static and roaming performances.
- A Town Centre Heritage Trail has been created by Friends of the Guildhall to highlight historic points of interest.



Improving the look, feel and safety of the town centre

Working with town centre businesses, and to ensure that the town centre feels and remains safe, we invested in the replacement and upgrade of the current **CCTV** system. The upgrade creates capacity for extension of its coverage and to deploy demountable CCTV.

Britain in Bloom campaign is a borough-wide partnership which includes residents, businesses, schools, community groups and a wide range of volunteers. Not just a floral competition; it makes a major contribution to promoting the local economy and increasing civic pride. We have won Gold in the Small City Category for the past 18 years running. The Britain in Bloom entry has driven improvements to the town centre roundabouts with landscaping and art sculpture. Local business frontages have improved with hanging baskets and there has been an increased number of floral displays in the town centre public spaces such as the award winning queens gardens.

Six Newcastle venues including Queens Gardens in the town centre are among 1,970 sites in the UK that have received prestigious **Green Flag status**. The international scheme, managed by leading environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, celebrates spaces that boast the highest possible environmental standards, are beautifully maintained and have excellent visitor facilities.

Newcastle town centre is a vibrant and safe place to visit for a great night out, according to the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM). The town centre has been granted the prestigious **Purple Flag** by the for the fifth year in a row. The scheme takes a hard look at the early-evening and night-time offer in towns and cities across the country. Areas assessed include the quality of bars, clubs, restaurants, cultural attractions and public buildings, as well as the efforts of organisations to create a safe and welcoming space.

Town Centre Leaders Group, known as the Town Centre Board, comprises key partners of the Council, Staffordshire County Council, New Vic Theatre and Keele University. This group sets the strategic direction and action plan for the future town centre.

Newcastle Task Force, known as the Town Centre Officer Group, coordinates the delivery of an action plan on the ground. Working with partner agencies such as BID, Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Police, they promote and develop a vibrant town and to reinvigorate the historic markets as part of the Newcastle town centre offer.

Newcastle Together, are stakeholders such as business owners and residents engage at regular meetings to provide feedback and coordinate their resources and to deliver a Town Centre For All.

Investment and Diversification

Newcastle is among 100 places which have been invited to develop proposals for "Town Deals" which Ministers say will be supported by a £3.6 billion fund. Locations eligible for support from the Towns Fund include places with proud industrial and economic heritage but have not always benefitted from economic growth in the same way as more prosperous areas.

A Future High Streets Fund bid focussing on the Rycroft site was successful and will enable a spend of £150,000 to develop a business case for the site. This could see us secure £5-10 million to support redevelopment.



A new Borough Growth fund of £304,000 will enable investment in the Council's key priorities to deliver a Town Centre For All.